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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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AUCTION ETHICS

The pronouncement made by the Italian consul general in New York concerning the use of the name of the Italian royal family in connection with the sale at the American Art Galleries of a collection of "valuable artistic property recently selected abroad by the Chevalier Raoul Tolentino" brings to the front certain phases of the auction situation in this country that need public discussion.

One of these is the forming of "collections" by "auction-dealers" for the express purpose of disposing of them by auction to the American public—a practice which is a perversion of the genuine function of the auction room. Another and even more serious phase is the practice of brandishing great names to attract public attention and stimulate public desire.

The Italian consul general took pains to inform the American public that none of the objects in the Tolentino sale belonged to the Italian royal family and none of them ever had. Mr. Gustavus T. Kirby of the American Art Association answered by saying that the catalogue and advertising matter of the sale had not stated that the objects had so belonged, a statement which was literally true.

But the cover page of the expensive catalogue proclaimed that the furniture and works of art came "from the castle formerly occupied by the Savoy Family," and the most prominent words on the cover page were those in big red type—"THE SAVOY FAMILY." If the intention was not to connect these works of art with the Italian royal family, and so give them increased value in the eyes of a certain wealthy section of the American public, then it might be asked why the words "THE SAVOY FAMILY" in red ink were made to overshadow everything else on the catalogue cover?

Year after year certain "auction-dealers" form in Europe assemblages of antiques and decorative art objects and bring them to New York to be "dispersed." This practice THE AMERICAN ART NEWS holds to be a perversion of the legitimate purpose of the auction room. The only set of auctions this country ought to see are (A) those originating with collectors who have died or who, still living, for some reason wish to liquidate their property, or (B) those originating with art dealers who become overstocked or who, for other reasons, wish to liquidate their holdings.

A full and free discussion of these things might serve to put the auction business of New York on a finer and better basis.

SOLACE IN ART

Every annual report of an art museum for the year 1921 issued thus far shows a marked advance in the number of visitors over those of the preceding year. In point of actual numbers the Metropolitan Museum registered the greatest increase, its total of 1,073,905 being not only greatly in excess of the attendance in 1920, but 136,022 larger than the greatest annual number of visitors ever recorded in a

twelvemonth, that having been in 1909, the year of the famous Hudson-Fulton anniversary exhibition. In point of percentage of increase the Chicago Art Institute leads in all the reports received thus far, its 68,825 increase being an advance of 14 per cent. In Boston the attendance at the museum increased 10 per cent, from 288,000 to 320,000. And in Minneapolis the increase of 13,287 visitors was about 6 per cent.

The case of the Chicago Art Institute is a striking example of the value of having an art institution situated in a section part of a city where it may be reached easily by the people. Bringing art to the market place is something more than a phrase in such a condition and becomes a real achievement. From the time it was first opened in Central Park, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has suffered by its remoteness from the homes of the greater part of the city's population. In addition to this, it labored for years under the disadvantage of a lack of easy or convenient means of reaching it. If that institution had been placed in such a site as the Public Library occupies at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, it is obvious that its use by the public would have been increased to a point almost beyond comprehension.

But there is another aspect of this increase of attendance that should be a source of profound gratification to all those interested in the fine arts. This is its relation to what is called the after-war psychology of the people. In their striving for a return to the happy conditions before the tragedy of 1914-1918, it is a sincere gratification to the professional art world to realize that the great mass of Americans have seemed to seek a solace in art.

PROGRESS BY MASS

In an interview published in the Washington Herald, David Edstrom, the sculptor, discusses the appalling effect on him, and as he believes on the creative spirit in American art, of the enormous materialism of the country in its construction work with stone, steel and iron. And then he makes this curious comment—curious in view of what has already been accomplished by organized art effort in the United States:

"Whatever any commission or any society or what any movement toward art or culture in America will do, it will never start the creative process through magnitude, even if we had art societies equal to the American Federation of Labor in volume of members." And he added: "The creation of things beautiful must emanate from a state of mind."

It may be mentioned that the Chicago Fair was enormous in size and of such distinguished beauty that it set the mark for all such exhibitions to follow afterwards. It was the work of a large body of men. And the artistic state of mind cultivated by it was higher than we ever had before in this country. The same word of appreciation can be given to every "commission or society" that has been formed for the purpose of forwarding the cause of art in America and, incidentally, of cultivating just that state of mind which will result in "the creation of beautiful things."

Don't let us abuse commissions or societies or movements toward art or culture in America. They may make some mistakes but their work, on the whole, is so distinctly fine and helpful that they deserve all the encouragement the practical art world can give them. Heart and soul they are art's friends.

Obituary

LAURENCE J. O'REILLY

Laurence J. O'Reilly, Commissioner of the Board of Water Supply of New York City, who died February 1, in his forty-second year, was known in art circles as an authority on antiques. He had made a study of the subject, and was particularly interested in armor and in copper and brass wares. He was art agent for William Randolph Hearst, for whom he made many purchases. He was also zealous in civic matters. He was one of the founders of the Non-Partisan Judiciary Committee, and he helped to organize the Union for Political Progress. He was an honorary member of Amos Pilger Post No. 361, American Legion. Before his entry into political life he was a well-known newspaper man.

Newly Found Stuart to Be Shown

A newly discovered portrait of Washington by Gilbert Stuart, belonging to Walter Jennings, is to be exhibited at the Knoedler Galleries for a week, beginning February 20.

CURRENT SHOWS IN NEW YORK GALLERIES

(Concluded from Page 1)

note among the many presentations of that much-painted part of the coast. His pictures are "different," and yet the difference defies description, for there is nothing bizarre or extreme in Mr. Vincent's technique. They are poetic, obviously, and all of them are distinguished by strength of composition.

"Reflections—Low Tide" is rich in subdued color and combines the blue of the water, green reflections, and yellow boats. "The Beach at Provincetown," the only one painted on Cape Cod, is devoted to a high gray pier which marches straight across the canvas and screens a narrow stretch of blue sea. "July Morning, Gloucester," portrays the sea in the blue that recalls the brilliance of the Mediterranean. "A Street in New England" and "A Lane in Rockport" prove the artist as much at home on shore as on the sea, and one of the smallest canvases and most charming as well, is "Old Houses, Rockport," with its pattern of white walls and red chimneys.

Animals Depicted at Macbeth's

Twenty-nine paintings, twenty-four sculptures and a score of sketches make up the colorful and interesting third annual exhibition of the Society of Animal Painters and Sculptors on view in the Macbeth Galleries until March 6. Matilda Browne is the only one of the members who both paints and models, for in addition to three of her charming cattle pictures she has an equal number of sculptures that have the same feeling of authority as pervades her more familiar field.

Frank Tenney Johnson has two distinguished night scenes with horses and buffaloes as their themes; Belmore Browne, two fine studies of the Rocky Mountain bighorn. Henry R. Poore is represented by four canvases, Carleton Wiggins by three, Carl Rungius by two and Edward C. Volkert by four. The sculptors represented include Grace M. Johnson, Eli Harvey, James L. Clark, Charles Cary Rumsey, A. Phimister Proctor and Frederick G. R. Roth. There are also sketches by Max Hermann, Henry R. Poore, Carl Rungius, Edward C. Volkert and Carleton Wiggins.

Potter's Pictures at Kingore's

The Mediterranean island in which the town of Palma de Mallorca is situated appears to have escaped the pioneering spirit of artists until William J. Potter invaded it. Charmed by its austere Italian Renaissance architecture and its colorful modern villas, he stayed there long enough to paint the score of canvases which, with pictures of Honfleur and our own Gloucester, are now on view in the Kingore Galleries through February 25.

Most of us would like to be invited to visit in the "Villa Margherita" at Palma so appealing is its beflowered veranda and its air of charming homeliness, particularly if its prospect included a view of the ancient "Cathedral, Palma de Mallorca," that might have been plucked up out of one of the medieval Italian cities.

In fact Mr. Potter is the tourist agent's friend, for he gives one an itch for travel to find his newly discovered island, stopping off at Honfleur en route, to see if Honfleur's ancient, tumble-down houses are as lovely in the moonlight as he makes them appear.

Modern French Drawings

Picasso and Derain dominate the exhibition of drawings and water colors by modern Frenchmen at the Daniel Galleries, through February. Their ascendancy, however, depends to a great extent on force of number, for Cezanne is represented by two fine examples, "Mont St. Victoire" and "Washer Women," and Toulouse-Lautrec by two inimitable drawings. Paul Signac's landscape and an impression of Marseilles are singularly light and free in spirit, and Marie Laurencin's "Self Portrait" is a sincere expression of modern treatment of form.

There is variety in the offerings from Picasso, ranging from "The Imbecile" and "The Suicide" of the period before his art had evolved beyond the pictorial, to his later abstractions, such as "Interior," which assembles the various elements of a room in a unified impression of the whole.

The modernism of Derain takes the form of a return to the simplicity of the classical, even primitive, and also has a quality which belongs to no period, but rather to all time. His contribution to the presentation of form is especially evident in "Woman's Head" and two pictures entitled simply "Head." A drawing of hands leaves nothing to be added in the portrayal of soft, rounded flesh.

Twenty-Six Portraits at Ehrich's

The appeal that a portrait show has to the public was plainly shown on the opening day of the exhibition of "Twenty-six Portraits by Twenty-six Modern Artists" at the Ehrich Galleries. The two rooms were jammed with visitors. Although many of our best-known portrait painters are represented it is the lesser lights among them whose work stands out most effectively.

Orlando Rouland's seated portrait of Lord Dunsany is a most engaging performance in color, pose and feeling. Walter Tittle makes his mark with his head of "Blanche," vivid in color and reflecting the personality of the pretty original. James Britton's "Cornelia" is an

other outstanding head, both for its color and its animation.

Wayman Adams has a very striking portrait of E. G. Kennedy, former head of the firm of Kennedy & Co.; Cecilia Beaux sends her "Mrs. Roderick Tower"; Irving R. Wiles is represented by "Aldys Squire," and Albert Sterner's "Mrs. Clarence Hay" resembles one of his heroines in a Mrs. Humphrey Ward novel. There are also canvases by Ernest L. Ipsen, Helen M. Turner, Wilford S. Conrow, Robert Henri, Henry R. Rittenberg and Roland Hinton Perry.

Emma Ciardi at Museum

Contemporary Italian paintings at the Brooklyn Museum include a number of examples by Emma Ciardi, which present a highly original and unhackneyed interpretation of the Italian landscape. Her subjects are the gardens, villas and palaces of her country peopled with figures in the costume of the XVIII century, and portrayed with particular ability in the handling of figures and in suggesting richness of color without actually employing it.

It is the low key of her Venetian scenes that constitute their chief charm. Her neutral tones in crumbling walls and dull skies achieve a remarkable warmth, and their interesting freedom of treatment makes a pleasing appeal to the imagination. Beppo Ciardi, a brother, is represented by two examples.

There is also shown "Alpine Pastures" by Segantini, once before exhibited at the Museum. Among the smaller paintings is "The Regatta" by G. Belloni, a pattern of white sails on deep blue, and "Capri" by G. Casciari. The majority of the paintings were loaned by the A. A. Healy estate.

Decorators at Wanamaker's

The Belmaison Galleries, John Wanamaker's, have arranged an exhibition of modern decorative paintings which go to prove that an interest in design is absorbing the attention of artist and layman alike. The paintings, panels, screens and frescoes shown are the work of thirteen modern artists who are vitally interested in applying their art to the needs of decoration.

Robert Chanler contributes a panel of brilliant birds of paradise and flower motifs, and a screen with a fascinating design of porcupines. Two paintings bearing the title "Dances," by Henri Caro-Delvalle, stress rhythm and movement by simplicity of treatment. Sketches for sea charts decorating the hall of the Cunard Steamship Company, by Barry Faulkner, display the transforming touch of artistry, and two frescoes by Gardner Hale, one a "Baigneuse" and the other a running figure, have stimulating vitality of line.

Arthur Crisp is represented by an animated rendering of a hunt under the title, "First Thanksgiving Dinner"; Hunt Diederich by a fire screen, and Knud Merrild, Curtis Moffat and Joseph B. Platt by panels of characteristic diversity. Florine Stettheimer has created paneled walls for a modern salon in white and gold. Albert Sterner, Victor White, Abram Poole, Stewart Rhinehart, Eyre de Lanux and an "Unknown Artist" are also represented.

Boscher's Vivacious Water Colors

Water colors by Ferdinand Boscher—at the Belmaison Galleries, John Wanamaker's, through February 28—have primary interest in their gem-like coloring, which in warmth and brilliance exert the full power of the medium. A preference for the XVIII century, with slight excursions into the early XIX century for subjects, aids in the creation of bright-hued fancies, which embody an essentially French vivacity and charm.

Ferdinand Boscher has exhibited repeatedly in France, and his work has also been shown before in this country, both in New York and Chicago. He is known abroad for his illustrating work, and one of his pictures has been acquired by the French government.

Wall Papers, Old and New

Wall papers shown at the Art Center to the end of the month include several original examples of the scenic designs employed in France in the early XIX century, such as "The Egyptian Campaign," made in Napoleon's time to commemorate the victory over the Turks, and the "Seven Ages of Man" printed by Delcourt of Paris.

A number of wall papers from the old Peter Cooper home date back fifty years or more, but have retained their vivid freshness of color. Several William Morris papers, a Muller reproduction, and some papers inspired by Pillement are included in the exhibition. Recent importations from Europe show the influence of the vogue for brilliant chintz-like colors in England and France. Among the papers made in this country are many boldly ornamental patterns, some in Oriental style, others in English, French and Italian, and some typically American.

Brooklyn Circuit Exhibition

The People's Institute, in cooperation with the Public Libraries of Brooklyn, will hold an exhibition of paintings by contemporary artists at all the libraries of the borough. The exhibition opened Feb. 1 at the Pacific Branch Library, Fourth Avenue and Pacific Street, where it will remain several weeks.

The artists represented are Colin Campbell Cooper, Edward Dufner, Frederick Friesche, Luis Mora, Clara Fairfield Perry, Anna Fisher, Alethea Platt, Eugene Higgins, Helen M. Turner, Arthur Powell, Chauncey Ryder and W. Granville-Smith.